DATA CLINIC NIGERIA

PRESENTS

AN ONLINE SEMINAR ON

HOW TO READ A BOOK

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If you think reading effectively sounds like hard work, **you are right**.
Most people won't do it.
Doing it takes you ahead!

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The Biblomats

THE FIRST CONTACT

Good day everyone!

I am your anchor on this online seminar on **how to read a book** as organised by Data Clinic Nigeria. It is my hope that this seminar be of benefit to us all.

Basically, this time out will be for those whose purpose of reading a book is to gain increased understanding. It is quite unfortunate that our curricular in schools across all levels be it primary, secondary and tertiary institution assumes we can read for understanding as long as we have learnt our ABC the right way. (The truth is) Far from it!

Quite a lot of us have been the most satisfactory student or one of the most satisfactory students in our days in school. We passed courses with creditable grades. The game was easy enough once you caught up to the tricks. If anyone had told us that we did not know much or could not read very well we would have been puzzled or perhaps raise an eyebrow. We were sure we could listen to lectures and read the books assigned to them in a way we could answer examination questions neatly. That had been the proof of our ability.

Believe me, lecture courses and textbook as used in our formal education setting merely make demands on our **memory** which is the more reason why most of us mindfully forget those information immediately after our exams. Have we really learnt in that regard? The answer is NO in the affirmative!

Reading is an art, a skill as in the case of any other skill, learning to read well will present difficulties we can overcome by effort and time.

You will agree with me that education does not stop with schooling nor does the responsibility of the ultimate educational fate of each of us rest entirely on the school system. It is now left for every individual to decide for himself whether or not he is satisfied with the education he got or he is now getting if he is still in school. If he is not satisfied it is up to such an individual to do something about it. Of course the extent or degree to which we have fallen prey may vary from individuals. The only way out is to learn to read better and then by reading better, we learn more of what we can learn through reading.

Whether we felt the need for reading or not, we must realise that we may be professionally occupied with matters that demand a kind of technical reading in the course of our work; the doctors have to keep up with medical literatures, the Engineers have to read engineering ethics, codes and standard, the lawyers will never stop reading cases, the businessman has to read financial statements, contact agreement and so forth. It matters less whether the reading is to learn or earn. It can be done right or wrong.

Generally, the only time I found out that many people read better, making an effort to read in the real sense of reading than they usually do is when they are in love and are reading a love letter, they read between the lines and even in the margins; they read the whole in terms of the part and each part in terms of the whole. They grow sentence to content and ambiguity, to insinuations and implications. They perceive colour of words, the odour of phrases the taste of every alphabet in the letter and even the weight of sentences. More surprisingly, they may even take the punctuation into account.

Worthy of note is that one of the primary rules of reading is to spot the most important words the author uses. Spotting them is not enough

really, you have to know how it is being used. Finding an important word merely begins the more difficult search for the meanings which the word is used to convey as it appears here and there within the text.

In recent time, we have allowed Radio, Television and social media to take over many of the functions once served by the books just as photography has taken over the functios once served by painting and other graphic acts. Admittedly, visual communication of news event, movies and the likes have enormous impact. The ability of Radio to give us information while doing other things for instance cooking is remarkable, and a great time saver. But let's put it to ourselves this way - has modern communications media enhanced our understanding of the world in which We live? There is a sense in which we moderns are so much inundated with facts to the detriment of understanding.

One of the reasons for this situation is that the very media mentioned above are so designed as to make thinking seem unnecessary. The packaging of intellectual positions and views is one of the most active enterprises of some of the best minds of our day. This packaging is often done so effectively that the viewers, listeners or reader does not make up his own mind at all. Instead, he insert a packaged opinion into his mind. Somewhat, like inserting a DVD disc into its player. He then pushes a button or even sit back at the comfort of his chair to playback the opinion whenever it seems approoriate to do so. He has performed acceptably without having to think.

The rest of this session will focus on the following key areas:

2nd Contact - active reading

3rd Contact - the levels of reading

4th Contact - pigeonholing a book (i.e categorizing it)

5th Contact - x-raying a book

6th Contact - coming to term with an author

7th Contact - different kind of reading matter

8th Contact - syntopical reading

It is my hope that, we find this seminar beneficial and get a paradigm shift in the positive direction. The techniques and rules we shall be sharing with

ourselves are tested and trusted and I strongly hold the believe that by the end of this seminar we would definitely be switched on and read well than we had ever done in the past.

Looking forward to seeing you in the 2nd contact!

Good bye!!!

2nd CONTACT

ACTIVE READING

As noted earlier, this course is principally meant to develop our skills in reading books and any kinds of reading matters be it newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, articles and even advertisement. You will agree with me that reading is an activity, so every reading must certainly be active to some degree.

Completely passive reading is impossibble, we can't read with our eyes immobilised and our minds asleep. One reader is only better than the other in proportion to his spread on a wider range of activity and the amount of efforts put forth. The most efficient reader is better because he demands more of himself and the text before Him.

Strictly speaking, there can be no absolute passive reading. Many people think that as compare to writing and speaking which are obviously active undertakings reading and Listening are entirely passive. They erroneously think the writer or speaker does all the work and the readers or listeners have nothing to do. Reading and Listening are thought of as passively receiving communication from someone who is actively engaged in giving or sending it.

Now what does active reading entails? It suffices to say that given the same book to read one person reads it better than the other

(1) by reading it more actively

(2) by performing each of the act involved more skilfully.

Reading is a complex activity just like writing is. It consist of a large number of separate acts all of which must be performed in a good way

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for effective reading. By extension, the person who can perform more of these acts is better able to read well.

So, what are we aiming at in the course of a reading undertakings?

In other words, **what is the goal of our reading**?

Suppose you have a book you are interested in reading. The book consist of language written by someone for the sake of communicating something to you. Your success in reading it is determined by the extent to which you receive everything **the writer is intended to communicate**. There is the book and here is your mind. As you go through the pages, either you understand perfectly everything the author has to say or you do not. If you do, you may have gained information but you could not have increased your understanding.

If the book is completely intelligible to you from A-Z then the author and you are like two minds in the same mold. The symbol on the pages merely express the common understanding you had before you met.

On the contrary, if you do not understand the book perfectly well, let's even assume that you understand enough of the book to know that you do not understand it at all. You know that the book has more to say than you understand and hence that it contains something that can increase your understanding.

If you find yourself in this trap what do you do?

(1) take the book to someone else who you think can read better than you and have him explain the parts that trouble you (This could be a living person or another author)

(2) you may decide that what is over your head is not worth bothering about that you understand enough. In either case you are not doing the job of reading that the book requires.

What is effective reading?

The job of reading is done only in one way, it is a unidirectional, one man show (nobody can help you to read). Without any external help of any sort, you go to work on the book with nothing but the power of your mind, operate on the symbols before you in such a way that you gradually lift yourself from a state of less understanding to the state of more understanding. With working on your mind so you can launch it into elevated understanding. This is a highly effective reading, accomplished by the **mind working** on a book, the kind of reading a book that challenges your understanding deserves.

Thus, reading can be defined roughly as the state of elevating from less understanding to more understanding. The skilled operations that cause this to happen are the various acts that constitute the art of reading. Passing from the state of understanding less to understanding more by our own intellectual efforts in reading is a major exertion on our intellectual equipment. Obviously it is a more active kind of reading than you have done before now, entailing not only more varied activities but also much skill in the performance of various acts required.

Reading for information and reading for understanding

I supposed you know, there Is a clear-cut distinction between reading for information and reading for understanding. Let's consider the scenario in which we speak of ourselves as reading a newspaper, magazine or

anything else that according to our skill and talent is at once thoroughly intelligible to us. Such books only increase our store of information but they can not improve our understanding because our understanding is equal to them before we started the reading. Otherwise we would have felt the shock of puzzlement and perplexity that come from getting in over our depth.

In the second situation - reading for understanding - suppose we try to read a book that at first we do not completely understand. Here, what is to be read is initially better or higher than the reader. In this sense the writer is communicating something that can really increase the reader's understanding. Such communication must be possible between unequal or else one person will never learn from the other whether through speech or writing. By learning I mean understanding more, not remembering more information that has the same degree of intelligibility as other information you already possessed.

There is clearly no difficulty of an intellectual sort about giving new information in the course of reading if the new information is in the same level with what we already know.

Suppose you know some of the fact of Nigeria's history and understand them in a certain way, you can easily acquire more facts by reading the same sort of information with little or no effort. At this point, let assume there is a greater understanding available here than we possessed before we started to read, if we can now manage such understanding then and only then are we now reading in the sense we are all out to achieve in this seminar - reading for understanding!

At this stage you have indeed elevated yourself from the level of less understanding to that of more understanding. Of course, indirectly by the writer who have something to teach you in the first place.

CONDITION UNDER WHICH READING FOR UNDERSTANDING TAKES PLACE

(1) Initial inequality in understanding = the writer must be "superior" to the reader in understanding and his book must convey in readable form the insight he possesses which the potential readers lacks.

(2) The readers ability to overcome the inequality barrier - the reader must be able to out smart this inequality in some degree perhaps fully, but always approaching equality with the writer to the extent that charity of communication is achieved.

IN SUMMARY

We can only learn from those "better" than we are. We must know who they are and how to learn from them. Till we meet again in our next contact let's not forget our **subject** remains **how to read a book when understanding is the** aim we have in view as against mere information.

3rd CONTACT

The Levels of Reading

The goal a reader seeks determines the way he reads.

The effectiveness with which he reads is determined by the amount of efforts and skills he puts into his reading.

In other words, the level with which he reads determines the height of his understanding.

Differences between level of reading must be understood before any effective improvement in reading skill can occur.

There are **four level**s of reading:

(1) **ELEMENTARY READING** = initial reading, rudimentary reading, basic reading, all of these terms suggest that as we master this level we pass from non literacy to at least beginning literacy. In mastering this level one learn the rudiment of the art of reading, receives basic training in reading and acquire basic skills. This level is called elementary because because this level of reading is learnt primarily in our elementary school.

Our first encounter with reading is at this stage. Our problem far then is to recognise the individual words on the pages. Those DAYS, we only see collection of white marks on a black board. What the mark say is nt really clear to us as at then. For instance - this land is not for sale intetestingly those are the first words I read myself. Of course on a landed property in my area. Then I was merely concerned with the language, the pronunciation as against meaning.

(2) **INSPECTIONAL READING** = this level of reading is characterized by its special emphasis on time. Here, the one who is interested in reading is allowed a set of time to complete an amount of reading. Another name for this level is skimming or pre-reading. However, this is not the kind of skimming that is characterized by random or casual browsing through a book. That said, Inspectional reading can be thought of as the act of skimming systematically.

At this level our aim is to examine the surface of the book, to learn everything that the surface alone can teach us. Perhaps, the question at this first level is "what does the sentence say" but here at this level the question is typically what is the book about? That is a surface question, other question of similar nature are: What is the structure of the book or what are its parts ?

At the completion of an Inspectional reading of a book, no matter how short the time you had to do it, you should be able to answer the question. What kind of book is it - a novel, history or scientific treatise.

Most people, even many quite good readers are unaware of inspectional reading. They start a book on the first page and flow steadily through it without even reading the table of content. They are therefore faced with the task of achieving a superficial knowledge of the book at the same time that they are trying to understand it. That compounds the difficulty!

(3) **ANALYTICAL READING** = this level of reading is both more complex and systematic activity than any of the two levels described so far. Depending on the difficulty of the text to be read, it makes more or less heavy demand on the readers. Analytical reading is thorough reading, complete reading or in a plain term good reading. The best reading you can do. If inspectional reading is the best you can do within limited time analytical reading is the best and most complete reading that is possible

when you are not constrained by time. The analytical reader must ask many and organized questions of what and how he is reading.

I want to emphasize at this point that, analytical reading is intensively active. At this level of reading, the reader grasp a book and work at it until the book becomes his own! A saying goes thus, **some book are to be tested, others to be swallowed and a good number are to be chewed and digested**. Reading a book analytically is chewing and digesting it. **Of importance is the fact that analytical reading is hardly ever necessary if your goal in reading is for information and entertainment.** Analytically reading is pre-eminently for the sake of understanding. It is what is required to bring your mind from the state of understanding less to the state of understanding more which is almost impossible until you have atleast some skill in analytical reading. This skill is exactly what we are all out to achieve in this seminar on **HOW TO READ A BOOK!**

(4) **SYNTOPICAL READING** = this is the Most complex and systematic type of reading of all. It makes a very heavy demand on the reader even if the materials he is reading are themselves relatively easy and unsophisticated. This might also be called comparative reading in that it revolves around the same subject. When reading synoptically, the reader reads many books on the same subject placing them in relation to one another. With the help of the books read, a synoptical reader is able to construct an analysis of the subject that may not be in any of the books consulted. In the light of what has been said, it can be inferred that synoptical reading is the most active and effortful kind of reading we can engage in.

The rest of our discussion in contacts to come will be focused majorly on analytical reading and synoptical reading with inspectional reading standing tall as a key player in both of these levels of reading for understanding. See you in the 4th contact-pigeonholing a book! Till then stay blessed and healthy!

GOODBYE!!!

4th CONTACT

Pigeonholing a Book

The activity of reading a book especially a long and difficult one poses the severest problem any reader can face. Reading a short story is always very easy than reading a novel, reading an article Is almost always easier than reading a book on the same subject. If you can read an expository book be it a history book, a philosophical work or a scientific treatise then You can read an article or an abstract in the same field since articles and abstracts are always shorter.

Now let's quickly look at the.... **GOLDEN RULES OF ANALYTICAL READING**

(1) **You must know what kind of book you are reading** and you must know this as early in the process as possible preferably before you begin to read. You must know for instance, whether the book you are reading is a fiction - a novel, a play, an epic or whether it is an expository work of some sort. Almost every reader knows a work of fiction when he sees one. You must also know what kind of expository work it is. There are two types of expository works namely theoretical and practical.

We will for now focus on the expository book and steps on how to tell what type a book is.

An expository book is one that conveys ` "**KNOWLEDGE**". Any book that consists primarily of opinions, theory, hypothesis or speculations for which the claim is made more or less plainly that they are true in some sense, or conveys knowledge in the exact meaning of knowledge is an expository work. As with fiction most people know an expository work when they see it.

So how do you go about the first rule particularly the last clause in the string of words?

Inspectional reading - the second level of reading - as mentioned in our 3rd Contact. I want to believe it's heavily important to take a slight swipe at inspectional reading.

What does it entail?

How do we do it?

The first thing to realize is that there are two aspects of inspectional reading though they are just an aspect of a single skill.

(1)- SKIMMING OR PRE-READING = this is the first sub-level of inspectional reading. Here your Main goal is to determine whether or not the book requires a more careful reading. This kind of quick run-down is an effectively efficient separation process that helps us separate the chaff from the real kernel of nourishment.

Skimming allows you to know the authors contention as well as what kind of book he has written so the time you have spent looking through the book will not have been wasted.

How can You do SKIMMING OR PRE-READING ?

What follows are the steps of skimming a book

(1) Look at the title page if any and the PREFACE : At this point read each quickly nothing the subtitles and other indications of the scope and aim of the book or the author special angle on the subject.

(2) Study the table of contents - to get a general sense of the book's structure, the table of content stands at the core of effective skimming activity. It is astoundingly surprising how many people never even glance at a book's table of content

unless they wish to look something up in it. Infact, many author spend a considerable amount of time in creating the table of content and it is sad to think their efforts are often wasted.

(3) Check the index if the book has one - most expository work does. The index allows you to make a quick estimate of the range of topic covered, and of the kind of the book and of the author referred to. There and then You must be able to make a quick judgement of their importance on the basis of your general sense of the book as obtained from step 1 and 2. The pages you read may contain the Crux - the point on which the book hinges. Or the new departure which is the key to the author's approach and attitude.

(4) Read through the publisher's blurb if it has one - the publisher's blurb is used by the publisher and sometimes by the author himself to try to summarize accountably the main point in their book. This effort should not go unnoticed. Upon completing these four basic steps you may already have enough information about the book to know that you want to read it more carefully or otherwise as the case may be.

(5) From your general and still rather vague knowledge of the book's content now look at the chapters that seem to be pivotal to its argument. If these chapters have summary in their opening or closing page as they often do, read the statements carefully.

(6) finally, turn the pages, dipping here and there, reading paragraph or two and even several pages in sequence. Flip through the book in this manner, looking for signs of the Main contentions, listening for the basic pulse beat (crux beat) of the matter. Ultimately, do not fail to read the last 2 or 3 pages or if these are an epilogue the last few pages of the main part of a

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book. Author usually sum up what they think is new and important about their work in these pages.

These steps as highlighted above represent your first level of systematically and technically inspecting/skimming a book. Heeding to this suggestions will help you sustain the attitude of effective reading. You will be surprised to find out how much time you will save, pleased to see how much more you will grasp, and relieved to discover how much easier it all can be than you had supposed.

(2)- The second type of inspectional reading. I would like to discuss here what is called **superficial reading.** It's a type of reading done for difficult books that you find above your level or let's say a book that has some part you don't understand. Reading a book that has some part you don't understand implies the author knows more than you do and you have something to learn if you eventually understand the message of the author.

Superficial reading focuses on what is understood and ignoring what is hard to understand from the book. This kind of reading is done for a book you have found worthy of your time and thus you want to read it more than once because of the beneficial knowledge it contains.

Suppose you pick up a book with high hope of enlightenment only to find out that you have been struggling profusely to enter the realm of understanding the author, the more you try the less you understand. It is natural enough to conclude that it was a serious mistake to have considered reading the book in the first place. But then that was not the mistake! The mistake lies in you expecting too much from a difficult book the first time of going through it.

Now what is the right approach? The simple rule in tackling a difficult book for the first time, **read it through without ever stopping** to look up or ponder the things you do not understand right away. Pay attention to what you understand and do not be stopped by what you cannot grasp immediately.

You will have a chance of understanding it on a second reading, but that requires you to have read the book at least once. What you understand by reading the book through to the end even if 50% or less will help you when you take the additional effort later to go back to the places you passed by on the first reading. Most of us were taught to pay attention to the things we do not understand, we were told to look up the dictionary, encyclopaedia, footnotes, commentary and the likes to get help but when these things are done **prematurely** they only impede our reading instead of helping it. These steps as highlighted above are the signal flags wave by the author to let you know which way the wind is blowing. It is not the author's fault if you will not stop, look and listen.

Types of Expository books !

Now, the problem is not really in distinguishing non fictional work from fiction but to recognize that there are various kind of expository(non-fictional) books.

The kind of information and enlightenment that a history or philosophical book offers are not the same. The problems addressed by a book on physics and another on morals are not the same and neither would the methods employed by the writers in solving these two different problems. There are basically two types of expository books namely: PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL BOOK.

Everybody uses the word "THEORETICAL and PRACTICAL" but we have an intended meaning here. To put the record straight, practical has **to**

do with what works in some way at once or in the long run. The theoretical concern something to be seen or understood.

If we polish the rough truth that is highlighted above, we come to the distinction between knowledge and action as two different ends a writer might have in mind. Knowledge can be used in many ways not only for controlling nature and inventing useful machines or instruments but also for directing human conduct and regulating man's operation in various field of skill. To make knowledge practical we must convert it into operational rules. We must pass from knowing what is the case to knowing what to do about it if we wish to get somewhere.

This distinction between "THEORETICAL and PRACTICAL" is summarized between knowing that and knowing how!
Theoretical books teach us that something is the case. (i.e. knowing that)
Practical books teach us how to do something you want to do or think you should do. (i.e.knowing how)

In the light of all that, if we were to write a book based on this segment of the seminar (i.e. how to do inspectional reading), is such book going to be practical or theoretical?

Yep ! Practical ! Any guide book is a practical book. Any book that tells you what you should do or how to do it is practical.

Thus, all class of practical books includes all exposition of arts to be learned, all manuals of practice in any field such as engineering or medicine or cooking and all treatise that are conveniently classified as moral such as books on economic, ethics or political problems.

Sometimes you can detect that a book is practical by its title - if the title contain such phrases as the art of, or how to, then you can spot it at

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once. If the title name field that you know are practical such as ethics or politics, engineering or business or many cases of economics, law or medicine, you can classify the book fairly readily.

Let's consider these two books and see if we can be led on by the title
(1) an essay concerning human understanding

(2) a treatise concerning the origin, extent and end of civil government.
Which of these is theoretical or practical.

Of course (1) is theoretical and (2) is practical

Let's take a short leap on theoretical books.

Traditionally, theoretical books can be classified into science, history and philosophy. The big assumption here is that everybody knows the difference here in a rough way.

In the case of history the title always does the trick if the word history does not appear in the title the rest of the front matters is likely to inform us that this is a book about something that happened in the past not necessarily in the far past of course because it may happened only yesterday.

The title of a scientific work is usually less revealing than the title of a history book. The word science sometimes appears but more often the name of the subject matter appears such as psychology, geology or physics. Then we must know whether the subject matter belong to the scientist as geology clearly does or to the philosopher as metaphysics clearly does.

At this point, I am going to raise a question, I am likely not to analyse it at all, but drop a position. What is the basic distinction between science and philosophy, noting that the newtonian classic was titled

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mathematical principles of natural philosophy a supposedly pure physics textbook.

My position!

Science is experimental or depends on elaborate observational research, whereas philosophy is merely an armchair thinking with deep sense of apology to the philosophers in the house. In the light of what has been said it is rather natural to say that books differs in the kinds of knowledge they have to communicate, books are all out to instruct us differently and if we are to follow them, we must learn to read each kind in an appropriate manners. See you in the 5th contact - X-RAYING A BOOK

The 5th CONTACT

X-RAYING A BOOK

Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as a analytical reader is to find this hidden skeleton. A book comes to you with flesh in its bare bones and clothes over its flesh. It is all dressed up. You do not have to undress it or tear the flesh off its limbs to get at the firm structure that underlies the soft surface. But you must read the book with X-ray eyes for it is an essential part of your apprehension of any book to grasp its structure. Every book without exceptions that is worth reading at all has a unity and an organisation of parts. A book that did not would be a mess. It would be relatively unreadable, as bad books actually are : there are two basic rules for X-raying a book to unveil its hidden structure

(1) State the unity of the book as a whole in a single sentence or better still a short paragraph. This means that you must state what the book is about as briefly as possible.

Note ! To say what the whole book is about is not the same as what kind of book it is. This is like asking a person what is he about, what is he up to. So we can wonder what an author is up to, what he is trying to do. To find out what a book is actually about is to discover its theme and main point, you must apprehend the unity of a book with definiteness.

This is the only way to measure your success of grasping the main part. You must be able to tell yourself or anybody else what the unit is and in a few words. If it requires too many words, you have not seen the unity but a multiplicity. Do not be satisfy with feeling the unity that you can not express.

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(2) Spell out the major parts of the book and show how these are organised into a whole by being ordered to one another and to the unity of the whole.

As noted earlier in the course, reading is a complex activity. You have not grasped a complex unity if all you know about it is how it is one. You must also know how it is many not a many that consist of separate things but an organised plenty.

If the parts were not organically related, then the whole that they composed would not be one. In plain terms there would be no whole at all but merely a collection. There is a difference between a heap of bricks on and a single house. They can constitute on the other. There is a clear cut difference between a single house and a collection of houses.

A book is like a single house. It is a mansion having many rooms, rooms on different levels of different sizes and shapes with different outlooks, with different uses. The rooms are independent and separate. They are connected by doors and hinges, by corridors and stairways, by what architects call a "traffic pattern" because they are connected, the partial function that each perform contributes its share to the usefulness of the whole house. Otherwise the house will not be liveable. This analysis is very perfect.

A good book, like a good house is an orderly arrangement of parts. Each part has a certain amount of Independence, but must definitely connected to the other parts otherwise it will not contribute its share to the intelligibility of the whole. As house are more or less liveable, so books are more or less readable. The most readable book is an architectural achievement on the part of the author. The best book are those that have the most intelligible structure. Though, usually, they are more complex than poorer books, their greater complexity is also a greater simplicity because their part are better organised more unified.

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Stating the unity of a book (which is the First Rule of X-raying a Book) I supposed, a few illustrations of the rule in operation may guide you in putting it into practice. Let's begin with a book of Mathematics for example, you pick up a maths book and you can tell easily that this book is a compilation of geometry, equations, mensuration and introductory statistics. You will agree at this point that we have said a lot concerning this book the rest is just episode.

Let's take the plots in the book one after other as a way of illustrations. We mentioned geometry which includes but not limited to lines and plane shapes geometry. Now, under line geometry start outlining the various types of lines and their mathematics, from parallel lines alone you can solve problems involving alternate angles, vertically opposite angles, corresponding angles and the likes. Just to say little on the analysis. For plane shapes we have uniform and non uniform shapes and their mathematics. For non uniform shapes we have the mathematics of cones, trapezoid, tetrahedron etc. Under uniform shapes we have the mathematics of square, rectangle, cylinder etc on equation we have Linear equation, quadratic equation, simultaneous equation, one Linear, one quadratic equation, exponential equation, logarithm equation etc worthy of note is that most of this equation are embellished with various methods of solutions. Besides, this analysis can keep us here till Jesus comes.

You will appreciate the way we have collapsed the whole into its component parts and organising the parts into its whole. This method of analysis can be applied to any book without any fear of exception be it poems, novel, poetic work, journals, articles, textbooks name them. After you know the plot in this way, you can put the parts into their proper places. This is a good exercise to try our hand - on with any book of our choice. The good news = you do not need to always find out the unity of a book all by yourself. The author often helps you. Sometimes, the title

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is all that you have to read. Sometimes the author tells you the unity of his plan in his preface. In this respect, expository books differs radically from friction. A scientific or philosophical writer has no reason to keep you in suspense. In fact, the less suspense he keeps you in, the more likely you are to sustain the effort of reading him through. Like a news paper article, an expository book may summarize itself in its first paragraph.

WARNING !.

Do not be too proud to accept the author's help if he proffers one but do not also rely too completely on what he says in the preface either. Be guided by the prospectus the author gives you but always remember that the obligation of finding the unity of a book belong finally to the reader as much as the obligation of having one belong to the author. You can discharge that obligation honestly, only by reading the whole book.

Another way to x-raying a book is to find out what the author's problems were : The author of a book always start with a question or a set of questions. The book ostensibly contains the answer or answers to these questions. The author may or may not tell you what the question were as well as give you the answers that are the fruit of his work. Whether he does or not and especially if he does not, it is your task as a reader to formulate the questions as precisely as you can. You should be able to state what the book tries to answer and you should be able to state the subordinate question if the main question is complex and has many parts. You should not only have a fairly adequate grasp of all the questions **involved but should also be able to put the questions in an intelligible order.** Which are primary questions and which are secondary questions too. Which questions are to be answered first if others are to be answered later.

Summary of x-raying a book

(1) Classify the book according to the kind of subject matter

(2) State what the whole book is about with utmost brevity.

(3) Enumerate its major parts in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the parts.

(4) Define the problem or problems the author is trying to solve.

See you in the 6th contact - Coming to terms with the author

The 6th CONTACT

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE AUTHOR

in business negotiation coming to terms is usually the last terms, all that remain is to sign in the dotted line.... But in reading a book analytically, coming to terms is the first step beyond the outline. Unless the reader comes to terms with the author, the communication of knowledge from the reader to the author has not taken place.

A term is not a word atleast not just a word with further qualifications. If a term and a word were exactly the same, you would only have to find the important words in the book in order to come to term with it. But a word can have many meaning especially an important word. If the author uses a word in one meaning and the reader reads it in another, words have passed between them but they have not come to terms. Where there is unresolved ambiguity in communication there is no communication or at best communication is not complete. So long as ambiguity persist there is no meaning in common between writer and author. For the communication to be successfully completed, therefore, it is necessary for the two parties to use the same words with the same meaning - in short to come to term. You can not find terms in the dictionaries, Although the materials for making them are there present. Terms occur only in the process of communication. They occur when author tries to avoid ambiguity and a reader helps him by trying to follow his use of words. Coming to terms is the Ideal towards which writer and reader should strive. This is one of the primary achievement of the art of writing and reading. Terms can be thought of as the skilled use of words for the sake of communicating knowledge.

This brings us to another rule of analytical reading

(1) Find the most important words and through them come to term with the author. Note that the rule had two parts - the first part is to locate

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the important words, the word that make the difference. The second part is to determine the meaning of these words as used with precision. In other words, this rule deals with the interpretation of the content or meaning of the book.

You will with me that language is always imperfect as a medium of communication because words which are thought to be instrumental to language as a basic ingredient are always ambiguous, carrying several meaning. The more reason why we have to read interpretatively trying our best to overcome the obstacle ambiguity in language. We can expect a good author

to do his best to reach us through the barrier language inevitably sets up, but we can not expect him to do the job all by himself. We must meet the author half way. We as readers, must try to tunnel through from our side of the barrier. The likehood of a meeting of mind through language depends on the willingness of both reader and writer to work together. Just as teaching will not avail unless there is a reciprocal activity of being taught, so no author regardless of his skill in writing, can achieve communication without a reciprocal skill on the part of the reader.

FINDING THE KEYWORDS

We are now prepared to put flesh on the rule that require the reader to come to terms. How does he go about it?

How does he find the important or Keywords in a book.

You can be sure of one thing, not all the words an author uses are important. Better than that, you can be sure that most of his words are not. Only those words he uses in a special way are important to him, and for us as readers. Our major concerns now is the fact that some words in a book are far more important than the other. Since the author uses the words as everyone does in an ordinary discourse, the reader should have no trouble with them. He is familiar with the ambiguity and he has

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grown accustomed to the variation in their meaning as they occur in this context or the other.

An author uses most words as we ordinarily do in conversation, with a range of meanings and trusting to the context to indicate shift. Knowing this fact is some how helpful in detecting the more important words. We must not forget however that at different times and places, the same words are not equally familiar items in daily usage. Contemporary authors will employ must words as they are ordinarily used today and you as a reader will know which words these are because you are alive today. But in reading books written in the past, it may be more difficult to detect the words the author is using as most people did at the time and place it was written. The facts that some author uses archaic words or archaic sense of words complicates the matter further. Nevertheless, it remain true that most of the words in any book can be read just as one would use them in talking to one's friend.

You can not locate the key words without making an effort to understand the passage in which they occur. This is somewhat paradoxical,. If you do understand the passage in which of course know which words in it is the most important. If you don't fully understand the passage, it is probably because you do not know how the author is using certain words.. From our own point of view as a reader, the most important words are those that give us trouble. It is likely that these Words are important to the author as well. However, they may not be. It is also possible that words that are important for the author do not bother you and precisely because you understand them well. In that way, you have already come to term with the author. Only where you fail to come to term there and then You have to do a little more of work. To give a detail account of these matter would take us a lot of time. I have merely touched upon the most

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essential points. I hope I have done enough to make the rule a useful guide in practice. The more you put it in practice the more you will appreciate the intricacies of the problem. You will want to know something about the literal and metaphorical use of words. You will want to know the distinction between concrete and abstract words, proper and common names. You will want to be interested in the whole business of definitions. The difference between defining words and defining things why some words are indefinable but yet have definite meaning and so on and so forth. If the practice of analytical reading elicits these further interest, you will be in a position to satisfy them by reading books on these special subjecs. And you will profit more from reading such books because you will go to them with questions born of your own experience. Your comprehension of any book will be enormously increased if you only go to the trouble of finding its important words, identifying their shifting meaning and coming to terms with the author.

Looking forward to seeing you in the 7th contact = the different kind of reading matters.

The 7th CONTACT

THE DIFFERENT KIND OF READING MATTERS

In any art or field of practice, rules have a disappointing way of being too general. The more general, of course the fewer and that's an advantage. We have stated the rules of analytical reading reading generally so that they can be applied to any expository work. In other words, any book that conveys knowledge in the sense with which we have being using the word knowledge. But, you can not read a book in general. You only read particular book in a particular way. You may read a book of history, or a book in mathematics, a political tract or a work in natural science or a theological treatise. As a result you must have some

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flexibility and adaptability in following the rule. Fortunately, you will gradually get the feeling of how they work on different kinds of books as you apply all the rules we have learnt in the sessions of our segment on the seminar. Now, let's take suggestions on the different reading matters.

SUGGESTION ON HOW TO READ HISTORY

History is a word of many meanings. Firstly, there Is history as fact and there is history as a record of the facts. Here we are obviously going to employ the last sense - history as a record of the facts. There are many written records that are called historical. A collection of documents pertaining to a certain event or period could be called a history of it. Collection of event in your personal diary, collection of letters, could be construed as being a history of the time. You will agree with me that the elusiveness of historical fact is enormously magnificent. If you have listened to testimony about a simple matter of fact, such as an auto-accident. You will have realized how difficult it is to reconstruct the past, even a single event in the past from the memories of persons who actually saw it happen. Our court system concerns itself majorly with event that had happened in fairly recent past and in the presence of living WITNESSES.

Though, under stringent rules of evidence. A witness can not suppose anything, he can not guess or hypithecate or estimate (except under very carefully controlled conditions) and of course a witness is not supposed to lie, With all the careful rules of evidence, and cross exmination besides, can any member of the jury be absolutely sure he knew what happened exactly? So does a historian. He is concerned with event that occured a long time ago. All the witnesses of the event are usually dead. What evidence they give is not given in a court room there is no stringent and careful rules. Such witnesses often guess, hypothecate, estimate, assume and suppose. We can not see their faces to tell whether or not

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they are lying. They are not cross-examined and there is no guarantee that they know what they are talking about.

A closer look at history will bring us to the conclusion that history is closer to fiction than science if it must be affiliated with one or the other. It is usually admitted that history is closer to fiction than to science. This does not mean that a historian make up his facts,like a poet or story teller. However, we might get into trouble if we insisted too strongly that a writer of fiction makes up story. QUESTIONS TO ASK OF A HISTORICAL BOOK

Every work of history can be read as expository work, hence, we must ask the same question of a historical book that we ask of any expository books. Now as a quick reminder, the four basic rules of analytical reading are - (1) State the unity of the book as a whole in a single sentence or better still a short paragraph.(2) spell out the major part of the book and show how these are organised into a whole by being ordered to one another and to the unity of the whole. (3) enumerate its major parts in their order and relation and outline these part as you have outline the whole.

(4) Define the problem or problems the author is trying to solve. If these rules were turned into question, these questions must be answered to gain an appreciable grasp of the book we are reading. As far as the first question is concerned - what is the book about? Every book of history has a particular and limited subject areas. It is surprising then, how often readers do not go to the trouble to finding out what this is. And in particular they do not always note what limitation the author sets for himself. With regards to the second question, the historian tells a story, and that story of course occurred in time. Its general outline is thus determine so much so that we do not have to search for them. But there are more than one way to tell a story and we must know how the historian has chosen to tell his. Does he divides his work into chapters

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that correspond into years, decades or generatios? Or does he divides it according to other rubrics of his own chosen? Does he discuss in one chapter the economic history of his period, and covers its wars, religious movement and literary productions in others. Which of these is important to him? If we can tell the aspect of the story that seems most fundamental to the author then and only then can we understand him better. A good historian must combined the talent of a story teller as well as that of a scientist. He must know what is

likely to have happened as well as what some writer or witnesses said did happen. With regard to the last question, it is possible that no kind of literature has a greater effect on the actions of men than history. History tells us of the actions of men in the past, often does lead us to make changes to try to better our lot. For this reason, it is of great importance that history be read well. Unfortunately, leaders have often acted with some knowledge but not enough. With the world as small and dangerous as it has become, it would be a good idea for all of us to start reading history better.

SUGGESTION ON HOW TO READ SCIENTIFIC BOOK

The leading terms in a scientific work are usually expressed by uncommon or technical words. They are relatively easy to spot and through them you can readily grasp the propositions. The main propositions are always one. Science thus, is not chronotopic. Scientist unlike historian tries to get away from the locality of time and place. He tries to say how things are generally and how things generally behave. In other words, our basic rules of analytical reading directly apply.

SUGGESTION ON READING SOCIAL SCIENCES

The concepts and terminology of the social sciences pervade almost everything we read today. These concepts and terminology are also reflected in the vast number of current books and articles that may be

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grouped together under the heading of social criticism. If social sciences were always the same kind of mixture., we could become familiar with it as we have with history. The mixture shift from book to book and the reader is confronted with the task of identifying the various stands that go to make up what he is reading. It is customary in social sciences to read several books about a subject rather than one book for its own sake. This is because when reading social science we often have our eyes primarily on a particular matter or problems rather than on a particular author or book. If for example if our interest is on taxation we read half a dozen work on it subject. Typically, because there is no single authoritative work on any of these subjects by that we must read several books on them. Let's not forget that the four basic rules of analytical reading directly apply to each of the work that is read and they must be adequately observed. On a final note because of the characteristic of social science requires that we study more than one book at a time, developing our skill in syntopical reading cannot be over-emphasized.

The 8th CONTACT

SYNTOPICAL READING

When certain subjects are discussed, more than one book is relevant. Knowing that more than one book is relevant to a particular question is the first requirement in any project of syntopical reading. Knowing which book should be read, in a general way, is the second requirement. This second requirement

is a little more description demanding to satisfy. The difficulty becomes more evident as soon as we examine the phrase "two or more on the same subject" Suppose for example you are interested in reading about the idea of love. Since

the literature about love is vast, you will have no difficulty in creating a library of books to read. Especially now, since the Internet is littered with

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a magnificent number of them. Another supposition is that you have confined yourself to expository work, despite the undoubted interest of novelist and poets in the subject. You now begin to examine the books in you make shift library of love books what do you find? Even a cursory perusal reveals a very great range of reference. There is hardly a single human action that has not been called an act of love. You will agree with me that love is not even confined to the human sphere alone. If you proceed further enough in your reading, you will find that love has been attributed to almost everything in the universe. That is everything that exists has been said by someone either to love or to be loved or both.

Confronted with this enormous range of reference, how are we to state what the subject is that we are investigating. Can we even be sure that there is a single subject? When one person say 'I love rice' and another say "I love football" and the another say "I love mankind" are they all using the word "love" in any sense that is common? Is there infact some deep reason for that? Some reason that are not immediately apparent on the surface. Faces with this chaotic situation, you may decide to limit the enquiry to human love. Love between human being of the same sex or different sexes, of the same age or different ages and so forth. These are just a few of the questions that you ask by just reading a part of the standard expository literature of love. This level of reading implies that the identification of subject matters occur before the reading begins and not precede it.

THE ROLE OF INSPECTIONAL READING IN SYNTOPICAL READING as mentioned in our sessions earlier, the level of reading are cummulative that a Higher level includes all of those that precede or lie below it. Both inspectional reading and analytical reading can be considered as an anticipation or preparation for syntopical reading. It is even here that inspectional reading comes into play as a major tool or instrument for the reader. Let's assume you have a collection of 100 books all which

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appear to be on the subject of love. If you read everyone of them analytically, you would not only end up with a fairly clear idea of the subject that you were investigating but you will also know which if any of the books were not on the subject and things relevant to your needs. But to read a hundred books analytically might take you a decades. If you were able to devote full time to the project it will still take you many months. Some short cut is obviously necessary, which are deeply provided by your skill in inspectional reading. The first thing to do once you have collected all of the books on your list is to inspect the books. Through systematic skimming and superficial reading. Obviously, inspectional reading will not acquiant you with all of the subject matters or all of the insight that the author can provide but it will perform two useful function, (1) it will give you a clear enough idea of your subject so that your subsequent analytical reading of some of the books in your list is productive. (2) it will allow you to cut down your collection of books to a more manageable size. Final year project students, graduate research students, and research and development Personnel this is the skill you have been waiting For grab it with both hands. On a final note, our effort will be wasteful if we do not know how to read some books faster

than than other. If we spend the same amount of time on every book or article we read then we would have wasted time on books that deserve less attention and give less attention to books that really deserve good reading.

STEPS IN SYNTOPICAL READING

(1) Find the relevant passages= it is unlikely that the whole of any book is directly on the subject you have chosen or that is troubling you and this has to be done quickly. Because you do not want to loose sight of the facts that you are reading it for an ulterior purpose namely for the light I can throw on your own problems and not for it own sake.

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(2) bring the author to term =this is an of shoot of interpretive reading as discussed in our 6th contact coming to term with the author which means identifying his Keywords and identifying how he uses them. But now you are faces with a number of different authors and it is unlikely that they will have all used the same words or even the same terms. Thus, it is you who must establish the term and bring your authors to them rather than the other way around.

(3) get the questions clear =the questions must be stated in such a way and in such an order that they help us solve the problem we started with but they also must be framed in such a way that all or most of our authors can be interpretted as giving answers to them. (4) Define the issues = if a question is clear and if we can reasonably certain that authors answer it in different ways then an issue has been defined.

Finally, analyse the discussion, so far we have found the relevant passages in the works examined, created a neutral terminology that can apply to all or most of the authors examined, framed and ordered a set of questions that most of them can be interpretted as answering and defined etc what then remain to be done? Thorough analysis of the discussion of a problem may provide the ground work for further productive work on the problem by others Which may not have been possible without analysis and the dimension of the problem may not have been visible.

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